MOZART'S PIANO SONATAS

CONTEXTS, SOURCES, STYLE

JOHN IRVING

LECTURER IN MUSIC,

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

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Contents

CHAPTER ONE

The solo sonata in context

What kind of a composition was the solo sonata inherited by the young Mozart? In what situations would such a sonata have been played? For what sort of audience was it intended? In what ways might the cultural identity of that audience have influenced its expectations of a solo sonata and, consequently, the composer's work? Answers to preliminary questions such as these are required in order to arrive at a proper contextual appreciation of the solo piano sonata of the early classical period, and specifically, Mozart's contribution to this important genre.

J. A. P. Schultz, writing in 1775 put the matter thus:

> in no form of instrumental music is there a better opportunity than in the sonata to depict feelings without words . . . [except for symphonies, concertos and dances] there remains only the form of the sonata, which assumes all characters and every expression.[1]

This was in sharp contrast to the views held by the preceding generation of aestheticians, most notably by the rhetorician, Johann Christoph Gottsched, trenchantly expressed in his translation of Batteux's *Les Beaux Arts Réduits à un même Principe*:

> Music by itself is soulless and unintelligible when it does not cling to words, which must speak for it, so that one knows what it means . . . [a sonata is] a labyrinth of tones, which sound neither happy nor sad, neither touching nor moving.[2]

Such an observation stems from the philosophical principle that music is an *imitation* (*mimesis*) of nature, intended to impart a kind of secondary effect (such as 'moral improvement') in the perceiver, and that instrumental music is powerless to achieve this task without a clear succession of objects provided by a text.[3] Accordingly, instrumental music is quite literally, meaningless – a random succession of gestures with no connection to the natural world that music was supposed to represent. While the vast quantities of instrumental music written, published and circulated throughout the eighteenth century demonstrate that such philosophical speculation bore little resemblance to compositional reality, the acknowledgement of vocal music's superiority to instrumental music remained a prominent feature of much of the theoretical literature from Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) to Heinrich Christoph Koch's three-volume *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782–93).[4]

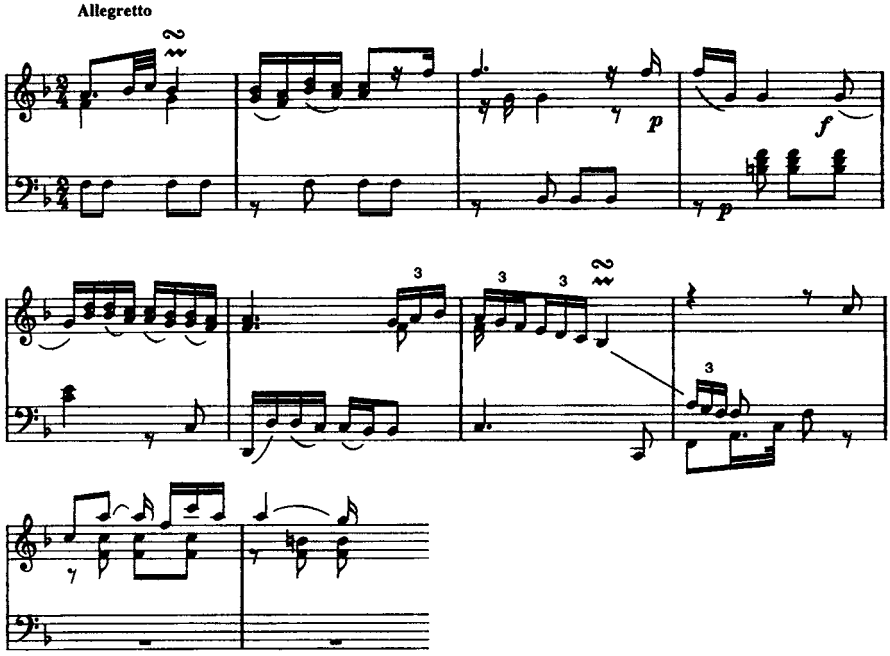
The *mimesis* model outlined above is typical of contemporary French thought on the aesthetics of instrumental music, as expressed in the writings of Batteux, Blainville and Rousseau, all of which became increasingly well known in the German lands during the 1760s through the translated extracts that appeared in Johann Adam Hiller's *Wochentliche Nachrichten*.[5]

Mozart may have encountered something of the prevailing French attitudes during his Parisian visits as a small boy in 1763–4 and 1766, perhaps through Friedrich Melchior Grimm (1723–1807), founder of the journal *Correspondance Littéraire*, to which his father was a subscriber.[6] His views on contemporary aesthetics, at this stage or any other in his life, are unknown, though given his father's evident attraction to the ideals of the Enlightenment,[7] he may well have encountered some of the key issues of the day concerning the nature of expression in music and other arts.[8]

In its full context the extract from Schultz's essay, quoted above, contrasts the domestic, or chamber, genre of the sonata with the public genre of, for example, the symphony. Composers were acutely sensitive to this distinction. It is essential, therefore, to keep in mind the respective roles of the sonata, a relatively small-scale piece best suited to conveying quite sophisticated musical ideas of an intimate nature, either within a purely domestic context (perhaps even for the private satisfaction of the player alone) or else to a semi-private gathering of cultivated music-lovers, and the altogether grander dramatic statements of a symphony or concerto, whose direct mode of expression properly belonged to the theatre or concert hall.[9]

The Allegretto of C. P. E. Bach's Sonata in F major, printed as an appendix to his textbook, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (1753),[10] demonstrates something of the intimacy attainable in a solo piano sonata: flexibility in the shaping of motives; their subtle rhythmic and intervallic variation; a feeling for appropriate phrase succession, balance and cadential emphasis (feminine cadences, resolving onto a weak beat, are especially prominent); and judicious harmonic intensification, all of which is absolutely at one with the nature of an erudite conversation in a domestic setting (example 1.1). The idiom is utterly at variance with the grandiose sweeps of sound and energy in, for instance, a symphonic passage by Stamitz or Cannabich (and later Haydn), a genre whose realm was public. In 1779 Bach began issuing sonatas *Für Kenner und Liebhaber* ('for connoisseurs and amateurs') whose musical techniques appealed specifically to a cultivated, rather refined, audience – not necessarily aristocratic – whose literary upbringing (perhaps including familiarity with several European languages) and musical training enabled them to appreciate a musical work as a kind of discourse, a logical unfolding, even progression, of ideas. Numerous musical theorists of the classic period actually expressed the formal organisation of musical themes, phrases, sections and movements in explicitly rhetorical terms. A logic in the progression of musical ideas was thought to exist

Example 1.1 C. P. E. Bach, Allegretto from Sonata in F, Wq. 63/5; H.74



in a manner analogous to a formal oration, and, in fact, technical vocabulary from the art of rhetoric (*exordium*, *propositio*, *tractatio*, *peroratio*, etc.) was routinely appropriated by musical theorists such as Mattheson, Kirnberger, Quantz, Forkel and Koch in their descriptions of musical form.[11] Perhaps the most influential of the German rhetoricians was Johann Christoph Gottsched, whose *Ausführliche Redekunst* (Augsburg, 1736) was many times reprinted during the rest of the eighteenth century. Leopold Mozart was aware of his work, and in letters to the Augsburg publisher, Johann Jakob Lotter, of 9 June and 28 August 1755, he sought out copies of each of Gottsched's major works, including the *Ausführliche Redekunst*.[12]

In his *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft* (1737), Mattheson likened music to oratory as follows:

> [In music] *disposition* differs from the rhetorical arrangement of an ordinary speech only in the subject, the matter at hand, the *objecto*. Hence it must observe the same six parts that are normally prescribed for the orator, namely: the introduction, the narration, the proposition, the proof, the refutation, and the closing, otherwise known as: *Exordium*, *Narratio*, *Propositio*, *Confirmatio*, *Confutatio*, [and] *Peroratio*.[13]

A similar approach to large-scale formal organisation was advocated by Forkel, in the *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (1788):

As musical works of any substantial length are nothing other than speeches for the sentiments, by which through a certain kind of empathy one seeks to move the listener, the rules for the ordering and arrangement of ideas are the same as in an actual oration. And so one has, in both, a main idea, supporting secondary ideas, dissections of the main idea [probably what we would term the 'development section' in a sonata form], refutations, doubts, proofs and reiterations . . . This order and sequence of the individual sections is called the aesthetic ordering of the ideas . . . A musical work in which this ordering is so arranged that all thoughts mutually support and reinforce one another . . . is well ordered.[14]

In the eighteenth century such rhetorical models were typically applied to symphonic and other concert works rather than solo sonatas. Within the intimate domain of the solo sonata, however, rhetoric still had a part to play in the sense that the oration required logical organisation and inter-relation of its components, as described above by Forkel. This matter is taken up at length in part III.

SOME AESTHETIC MATTERS

Consideration of the aesthetics of instrumental music is common to all the major strands of Enlightenment thought, though few commentators address their attention specifically to the sonata (Schultz's view, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, being one exception). French, German and English writers on music all tended to agree that instrumental music was inferior to vocal, normally supporting their view by recourse to a theory of 'Imitation'. This is well put by Blainville in his *L'esprit de l'art musicale*[15] according to whom music may move the soul of the listener by means of the voice or else by instruments, but whereas melody ('la melodie', meaning *vocal* music) possesses *natural* beauties, instrumental music ('la symphonie') possesses them only indirectly. Only if music is joined to words does it have the power to convey true emotional significance. Instrumental music, in other words, conveys its meaning at second hand. According to the theory of Imitation espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Dictionnaire de Musique*[16] the composer may

stir up the sea, fan the blaze, make rivulets flow, rains fall and torrents rage . . . calm the tempest . . . [however, he] will not literally imitate things, *but he will excite in the soul feelings similar to those that it experiences when it sees them* [my italics][17]

Elsewhere in his writings Rousseau's technical justification for music's expressive power (even at second hand) was melody, which alone was possible of rendering instrumental music sensible. In his *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (Paris, 1764) he had noted that 'Melody is the musical equivalent of design in painting; it is melody that delineates the features and forms, harmonies and timbres being only the colours'.[18] Later, in the *Dictionnaire*[19] Rousseau explains this overtly: 'c'est toujours du chant que se doit tirer la principale Expression, tant dans la Musique Instrumentale que dans la Vocale'. Though Rousseau does not mention any specific categories of instrumental music (such as the sonata) here, French musical writings of the previ-

ous decade do. Cahusac's article on 'Expression' noted that concertos or sonatas could paint a variety of moods but would be lifeless (because they lacked words),[20] a view repeated in Lacombe's *Le Spectacle des beaux-arts*.[21] As has already been implied, melody does not necessarily hold the principal position in the organisation of a sonata movement, in the way that, say, the solo voice ('chant') would in a French opera aria. A range of technical procedures to do with harmony, texture, rhythm and phraseology, all vie for attention from one bar to the next. Perhaps this was one reason why Rousseau regarded counterpoint as a meaningless babble, like several people talking at once.

In the *Allgemeine Theorie*, Sulzer touches on some specific ways in which emotion could be expressed, irrespective of vocal or instrumental genre. Among the technical means that Sulzer lists for suitable portrayal of a narrative in instrumental music are metre, dynamic variation, melody, rhythm and accompanimental style. Foremost though (and here he is at odds with Rousseau), is harmony, which:

> must move easily and naturally, without great complexity or ponderous suspensions, if the mood is gentle or pleasant. If the mood is violent or recalcitrant, however, the progressions should move haltingly, and there should be fairly frequent modulations into remote keys; the progressions should also be more complex, with frequent and unexpected dissonances, and suspensions which are rapidly resolved.[22]

The concept of an instrumental movement as a narrative was advocated by the Scottish philosopher and economist, Adam Smith (1723–1790). For Smith, instrumental music was a discourse, resembling in the sequence of its figures a conversation.[23] His *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, published posthumously in 1795, and probably written and revised between about 1777 and his death in 1790, is little-known to musicians. Smith, a Fellow of the Royal Societies of Edinburgh and London, Professor of Logic (1751) and subsequently Moral Philosophy (1752) at Glasgow University until 1764, and one of the group of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers whose most famous other member was David Hume (1711–76), is best known for his treatise *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), though his interests ranged far wider than economic theory; he was well read, passionately interested in continental 'Enlightenment' ideas, a keen lover of the arts and sciences. He owned a copy of Charles Avison's *An Essay on Musical Expression* (1752) as well as works by Rameau and Burney; he was familiar with some of Rousseau's ideas from his study of the *Encyclopédie*, to which he was a subscriber. Part II of Smith's essay, 'Of the Nature of the Imitation which takes place in what are called the Imitative Arts', contains a more spirited justification of music independent of words than any other authors examined here:

> Music seldom means to tell any particular story, or to imitate any particular event, or in general to suggest any particular object, distinct from that combination of sounds of which itself is composed. Its meaning, therefore, may be said to be complete in itself . . . What is called the subject of such Music is . . . a certain leading combination of notes, to which it frequently returns, and to which all its digressions bear a certain affinity.[24]

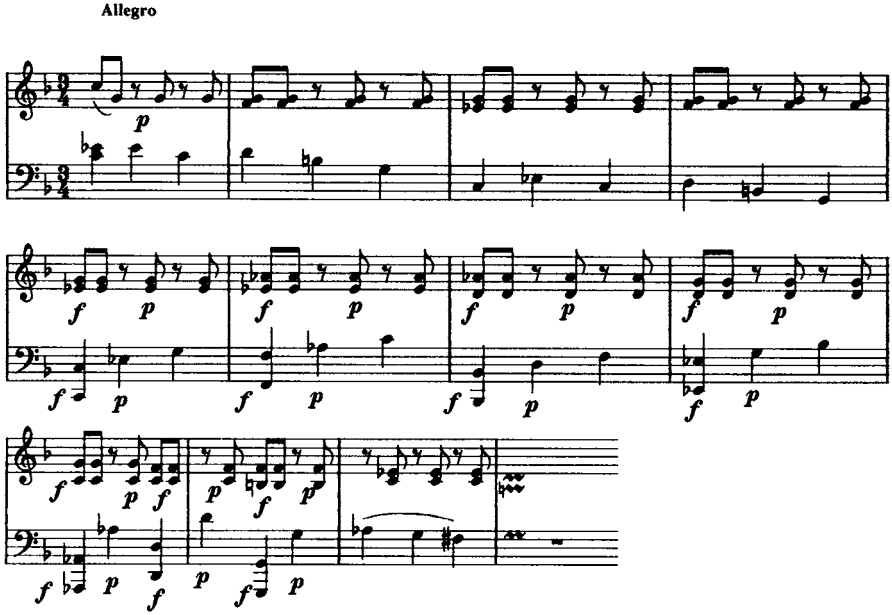
Smith seems here to be acknowledging the existence of an 'ordering' among the tones of a composition similar to that advocated by Forkel, in the *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*.

Though elsewhere in his essay Smith acknowledges the 'superiority' of vocal music over instrumental he nevertheless regards the latter as a 'system' from which the listener might derive intellectual pleasure.[25] The passage from which the following quotation is drawn specifically considers instrumental music (though not specifically the sonata) as he felt it to be *perceived*; by 'concert', Smith probably means simply 'performance', rather than a public concert:

> In a concert of instrumental music the attention is engaged, with pleasure and delight, to listen to a combination of the most agreeable and melodious sounds . . . *The mind being thus successively occupied by a train of thoughts* [my italics] of which the nature, succession, and connection correspond [to varying moods] is itself successively led into each of those moods or dispositions; and is thus brought into a sort of harmony or concord with the music which so greatly engages its attention.[26]

Naturally it is impossible to know to what extent, if any, these various aesthetic appraisals of instrumental music may have been held by salon audiences when listening to solo sonatas, though we may be sure that such matters, which were distributed widely in published form on the continent, were vigorously debated among those who had any pretence to 'Enlightened' conduct during the mid to late eighteenth century. We must remain sensitive, however, to the likelihood that, for an eighteenth-century audience, certain compositional techniques were genre-specific and that a change of genre may have radically altered the parameters of musical understanding. In his recent penetrating study of the reception of Haydn's late symphonies, David Schroeder has likened the use of syncopation as a specific means of creating tension in Haydn's symphonic transition sections to 'its use as a device in eighteenth-century opera to emphasize points of intense conflict and confusion' (citing examples from the Introduzione (bars 87–8) and Act I (bars 477–8) of *Don Giovanni*).[27] Schroeder argues that dramatic confrontation between different types of material in Haydn's symphonies – specifically the first movement transitions of nos. 82 and 86 – may therefore have been heard in an 'operatic' way by a concert audience. While the intended meaning of such effects probably survived transplantation from an opera to a symphony (that is, between two 'public' genres), it is debatable whether or not such effects retained their status within the 'domestic' environment of the solo sonata. In the first movement of Mozart's F major Sonata, K.332, the meaning of the syncopations at bars 56–66 is not 'dramatic' in the same way as an opera. Mozart's figure syncopates both at the level of the beat (bars 56–63) and at the metrical level (bars 64–5), producing a temporary accentual shift from 3/4 to 3/2. Within the same bars there is an analogous shift of harmonic rhythm, from a single chord per bar (bars 56–63) to chord changes every minim (bars 64–5) and at the end of the phrase, every crotchet, resulting in a carefully measured rhythmic accelerando (example 1.2). Such sophisticated interlocking of surface rhythm

Example 1.2 Mozart, Sonata in F, K.332, 1st movement, bars 56–67



and harmonic rhythm is a technical device perhaps better appreciated in a small room than in a concert hall, always supposing, of course, that Mozart's intended listeners were sufficiently aware of, and attentive to, the niceties of his musical language. Can we assume that they were? In order to satisfy ourselves that they might have we must investigate further the didactic role of the solo piano sonata and the most usual environment in which it was performed, the salon.

SONATAS AS TEACHING MATERIAL

Among the primary functions of the solo piano sonata was its usefulness for teaching purposes. In part, this was a reflection of the appointments held by composers such as Georg Christoph Wagenseil (piano tutor to Archduchess Maria Anna of Austria) and Johann Christian Bach, one of whose appointments, advertised on the title-page of his Op.17 *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte* (Paris, *c.*1774; London, 1779), was 'Music Master to her Majesty and the Royal Family'. While at times both Op.17 and its precursor, the *Six Sonates pour le Clavecin ou le Piano Forte,* Op.5,[28] are technically very demanding the general level of difficulty is quite modest, restricted to uncomplicated hand positions based on tonic and dominant triads in the opening movement of Op.5 no.1, for instance. Rather more dexterity is required in the G major Sonata, Op.5 no.3, which, while principally constructed from tonic and dominant scales and arpeggios, contains a greater number of passages

involving smooth transitions between adjacent hand positions and calling for security across a wider range of the piano; the ensuing theme and variations move in a deliberately graded way through right-hand semiquavers (variation 1), transferred to the left hand in variation 2, to triplet semiquavers for right and left hand respectively in variations 3 and 4. Wagenseil's various sets of published sonatas (entitled 'Divertimentos') work on similar principles. The first movement of his Op.1, no.1 (1753) is clearly for neatness of execution and reliability of fingering, while the third movement of Op.1, no.2 is for execution of ornaments.[29] Many of Haydn's solo sonatas up to about 1770 must also have originated as teaching pieces. The G minor, Hob. XVI:44 (*c.*1768) requires no great virtuosity of the player but proceeds, in its exposition at least, in a 'patchwork' of textures, each typically just a bar or two in length, that require of the player a high degree of rhythmic accuracy (bars 12–16) and clarity of part playing in the contrapuntal sections (bars 14–17 and 21–4).

Occasionally, Mozart refers to his use of his own piano sonatas in lessons. During his visit to Mannheim at the end of 1777 he became friendly with the family of Christian Cannabich (1731–98), director of instrumental music at the court of Elector Karl Theodore at Mannheim, and taught his daughter, Rosa, the piano. Mozart's C major Sonata, K.309, was written for her, the slow movement supposedly being her 'musical portrait'.[30] We are fortunate indeed to possess the following description, in a letter to his father of 14 November 1777, of Mozart's thoughts on the slow movement of this sonata, and how he proposed to teach Rosa the piece:

> We finished the opening Allegro today. The Andante will give us the most trouble, for it is full of expression and must be played accurately and with the exact shades of forte and piano, precisely as they are marked. She is smart and learns very easily. Her right hand is very good, but her left, unfortunately, is completely ruined . . . I have told her too that if I were her regular teacher, I would lock up all her music, cover the keys with a handkerchief and make her practise, first with the right hand and then with the left, nothing but passages, trills, mordants and so forth, very slowly at first, until each hand should be thoroughly trained.[31]

The slow movement is indeed highly expressive, calling for considerable sensitivity from the player. While the autograph is lost, a copy made by Leopold in December 1777 (now in private ownership in Switzerland, upon which the text of *NMA* is based) confirms Mozart's comments about the precision of the dynamic markings: in addition to *pp*, *p*, *f* and *fp* there is a profusion of slurs and other articulation signs. Good control of *cantabile* and a smooth *legato* is needed at bars 33 and 53, along with reliable part-playing (beginning at bar 40, for instance).[32] While the first movement of K.309 is not especially difficult, its rondo finale contains taxing passagework (triplet semiquavers in awkwardly linked hand positions at bars 40 ff. and 143 ff., and intermittent tremolando demisemiquavers (bars 58, 111, 162 and 221)). To achieve fluency in this rondo is not easy; both Rosa and Nannerl must have been accomplished technicians.

Talented female keyboard players were, in fact, relatively plentiful in the second half of the eighteenth century.[33] Indeed, the social etiquette of the age virtually dic-

tated a certain degree of keyboard proficiency: among aristocratic families, for instance, ability in this direction could be important in attracting an acceptable husband. During the 1780s several of Mozart's Viennese pupils were ladies from the higher echelons of society: Countess Thun, Countess Rumbecke; somewhat lower down the the scale were Maria Therèse von Trattern[34] (wife of the important bookseller and publisher), Barbara von Ployer and Josepha Auernhammer, the latter two of whom carved out successful careers as performers.[35]

Against this background we may speculate on some of the subtler aspects of sonata writing as they may have been appreciated by eighteenth-century listeners (particularly ladies) who had themselves been taught to play (in however rudimentary a fashion) similar pieces as a part of their musical education. Practically, this includes the precise technical coordination of mind, ears, eyes and hands. In addition, there are musical qualities such as: distinction between the characters of successive themes (sometimes of a 'singing' quality, sometimes rather more pithy and motivic in character) and 'patterns' (passagework); phrasing, including not just a feeling for melodic shape but also a sense of closure provided by the cadential network; correct accentuation; uniformity of pulse (against which syncopation might be measured, for instance); contrasts of texture; and points of particular harmonic interest, bound up (for more advanced players) with an overall sense of tonal continuity in the piece as a whole. Such was (and is) the intimacy of musical contact involved in learning to play a classical sonata movement. For a connoisseur listening to a fine performance of a sonata in a household salon in the second half of the eighteenth century, memories of their own previous experience of playing such music would perhaps have embraced some of the above. Arguably their critical framework was in part bound up with their own prior physical and mental engagement with the notes of a sonata as much as, if not more than, the abstract principles of rhetoric that they took along to a concert or theatre performance of a symphony. Both solo piano sonatas and concert symphonies shared similar designs (sonata form); but the listener's understanding of the two genres was probably quite different.

SALON PERFORMANCES OF SOLO SONATAS

Vienna

At the centre of Viennese cultural life in the reigns of Maria Theresia and Joseph II was the aristocratic salon. Our knowledge of salons comes partly from entries in the diaries, journals and memoirs of those who attended, such as Count Johann Karl Zinzendorf, Georg Förster, Charles Burney and Karoline Pichler.[36] At such salons the participants, consisting of Princes, Counts, Barons; the lesser Viennese nobility (the von Greiners, von Trattners etc.); and wealthy court officials or middle-class businessmen, would exchange ideas, gossip, play cards, discuss their latest reading matter (foreign-language textbooks and novels were popular with the Viennese:

Countess Thun – whose salons will be discussed presently – was quite fluent in English), entertain foreign guests, eat, drink, and listen to music.[37] Such documentation as we possess has survived by accident as much as design and provides a tantalisingly incomplete picture of what was clearly a major slice of musical activity in the Austrian capital and elsewhere.[38] It is séldom possible to recover any programme details of such private gatherings, though we do know that Mozart performed his sonatas in B flat, K.281 and D, K.284 at Hohen-Altheim, the country residence of Count Kraft Ernst von Oettingen-Wallerstein (1748–1802) on 26 October 1777.[39]

We glean something of the character of a Viennese salon of 1772 from the following reminiscence of Charles Burney:[40]

> I went to Mr L'Augier's[41] concert, which was begun by the child of eight or nine years old, whom he had mentioned to me before, and who played two difficult lessons of Scarlatti, with three or four by M. Becke[42] upon a small, and not good Piano Forte. All the *pianos* and *fortes* were so judiciously attended to; and there was such shading off [*sic*] some passages, and force given to others, as nothing but the best teaching, or greatest natural feeling and sensibility could produce . . . The company was very numerous, and composed of persons of great rank; there was the Princess Piccolomini, . . . the duke of Braganza, Prince Poniatowsky, lord Stormont, general Valmoden and his lady, Count Brühl, the duke of Bresciano, &c.&c. It was one of the finest assemblies I ever saw. When the child had done playing, M. Mut, a good performer, played a piece on the single harp, without pedals . . .
>
> The room was too much crowded for full pieces: some trios only were played by Signor Giorgi,[43] a scholar of Tartini, Conforte,[44] a scholar of Pugnani, and by Count Brühl, who is an excellent performer on many instruments, particularly the violin, violoncello, and mandoline. The pieces they executed were composed by Huber,[45] a poor man, who plays the tenor at the playhouse; but it was excellent music, simple, clear, rich in good harmony, and frequently abounding with fancy and contrivance.

As Burney notes in detail the names of the performers, the great sensitivity with which the young boy played on a second-rate fortepiano and the musical characteristics of the works played, we may safely assume that these were among the topics he had discussed with L'Augier's visitors. It was clearly a musical occasion that met with Burney's approval.

Burney was also impressed with the salon of Countess Wilhelmine Thun, which he visited on several occasions. He described her harpsichord playing in favourable terms, noting also that '[she] possesses as great skill in music as any person of distinction I ever knew.'[46] This assessment was praise indeed, for her distinguished visitors included Emperor Joseph II, of whom Burney noted:

> the Emperor [is] perhaps just [musical] enough for a sovereign prince, that is with sufficient hand, both on the violoncello and harpsichord, to amuse himself; and sufficient judgement to hear, understand and receive delight from others.[47]

Not quite a decade later, Mozart actively sought Joseph's patronage, with mixed success. He complained bitterly to Leopold[48] that a last-minute summons from Archbishop Colloredo had prevented him from meeting the Emperor at Countess

Thun's salon, at which the composer had become a regular visitor. The Countess, for her part, was a staunch patron of Mozart during his early years in the capital, even loaning him her fortepiano for the famous contest between himself and Clementi before the Emperor on 24 December 1781.[49]

Countess Thun's salons were perhaps the most famed in Josephine Vienna and were attended by the principal aristocrats, freemasons, intellectuals, writers and musicians of the day. Competing salons were held by (among others) Franz Sales von Greiner, Count Johann Baptist Esterházy, Prince Dmitri Golitzin and Baron Gottfried van Swieten.[50] In such an enlightened and sympathetic environment piano sonatas were evidently played (and no doubt eloquently discussed), including, perhaps, Mozart's two published collections, K.330–332 (issued by Artaria as 'Op.VI' in 1784)[51] and K.333, 284 and 454 (issued by Torricella as 'Op.VII' in the same year).[52] Many points of detail in these pieces benefit from the intimacy of performance in a small room. The opening movement of K.330 in C contains several formal subtleties which depend for their effect on the listener's close concentration. For example, the recapitulation restates the main secondary idea still in the dominant (bar 106), veering back to the tonic only on its repetition at bar 110; perhaps the most musically literate members of Countess Thun's salon would have spotted such an unusual tonal strategy. More difficult to spot is the role of the sequential phrase that opens the development section (bars 59–66), thematically unrelated to anything in the preceding exposition (or, indeed, the ensuing development). It returns only at the end of the movement (bars 145–50), and functions in a manner analogous to the design of many of Mozart's piano concertos from this time, in which the brief passage closing the 'tutti exposition' is only brought back at the end of the movement, following the cadenza.[53]

Paris

The Parisian nobility also maintained a busy calendar of salons at which many of the foremost literary and intellectual ideas of the age were discussed and at which there was regular informal music making. As in Vienna during the 1780s, accomplishment on a keyboard instrument was recognised as a desirable attribute for a young lady. Diderot's daughter played: Burney described her in 1770 as 'a great performer on the harpsichord, and has a prodigious collection of the best German authors for that instrument.'[54] Earlier that same year Burney had met and dined with the famous *claveciniste*, M^{dme} Brillon:

> After dinner we went into the music room where I found an English [square] pianoforte [by Zumpe] which Mr Bach had sent her. She played a great deal and I found she had not acquired her reputation in music without meriting it. She plays with great ease, taste and feeling.[55]

Doubtless many impromptu and unrecorded piano performances took place in the various salons. Mozart himself had taken part in a private performance at the

summer palace of Louis François de Bourbon as a child.[56] On his subsequent return to Paris in 1778, Wolfgang was instructed by his father to seek out as many as possible of their acquaintances made on that earlier visit, including the Duchesse de Bourbon and the Comtesse de Tessé, to whom the sonatas for piano and violin, K.8 and K.9, had been dedicated.[57]

Mozart's experience of Parisian salons in 1778 was decidedly mixed, to judge from his long letter of 1 May,[58] detailing a (presumably introductory) encounter with the Duchesse de Chabot:

> I had to wait for half an hour in a large ice-cold unheated room . . . At last the Duchesse de Chabot appeared. She was very polite and asked me to make the best of the clavier in the room . . . I said that I would be delighted to play something, but that it was impossible . . . as my fingers were numb with cold . . . She then sat down and began to draw and continued to do so for a whole hour, having as company some gentlemen . . . while I had the honour to wait . . . At last . . . I played on that miserable, wretched pianoforte. But what vexed me most of all was that Madame and all her gentlemen never interrupted their drawing for a moment . . . Give me the best clavier in Europe with an audience who understand nothing, or don't want to understand and who do not feel with me in what I am playing, and I shall cease to feel any pleasure . . .

On 18 July Wolfgang related to Leopold a happier occasion, among more astute musical company at which he 'played off [i.e. improvised] a galanterie sonata in the style and with the fine spirit and precision of [probably Michael] Haydn[59] and then played fugues . . . My fugal playing has won me everywhere the greatest reputation!'[60] Possibly Mozart's most satisfying musical encounters in Paris were with Count Karl Heinrich Joseph Sickingen (1737–91):

> a passionate lover and a true connoisseur of music. I spent eight hours quite alone with him. We were at the clavier morning, afternoon and evening until 10 o'clock, playing, analysing, discussing and criticising all kinds of music.[61]

Possibly among the works Mozart discussed with Count Sickingen were his recent sonatas, K.309, 311 and especially K.310, written about this time in Paris, which Mozart was attempting (unsuccessfully as it turned out) to have published, along with the six sonatas for piano and violin, K.301–6.

Despite such musically rewarding contacts as Sickingen it appears that Mozart's music was not hugely popular with the Parisians. Deutsch quotes a criticism (possibly relating to the 'Paris' symphony, K.297) of Mozart's contrapuntal idiom through which 'the Author obtained the suffrages of Lovers of that kind of music that may interest the mind, without ever touching the heart.'[62]

The A minor sonata, K.310, was written in Paris during the early summer of 1778 and it is not difficult to imagine how its frequently contrapuntal textures would likewise have failed to please this Parisian critic (though he acknowledged that there evidently were 'Lovers of that kind of [contrapuntal] music'. Melodic beauties 'touching the heart' are undeniably present in the slow movement (marked 'Andante cantabile con espressione') and in the episode beginning at bar 143 of the

finale, but on the whole, Mozart is making a serious statement on an expansive scale, in which rigorous thematic organisation plays a major part, extending over quite lengthy time-spans. The development section of the opening movement contains a close-knit contrapuntal treatment of one of the exposition themes (bars 58 ff.; see bars 16–20); the finale indulges in an invertible counterpoint texture at bars 203 ff., while melodic reinterpretations of its opening theme's accompaniment rhythm give rise to a polyphonic flowering at bars 87–99. Even within the lyrical Andante Mozart generates much of the forward momentum from the interplay of complementary strands of counterpoint (from bar 15 to the end of the exposition, for example). This 'intellectual' approach to musical organisation and continuity clearly did not have any appeal for a section of the Parisian public which favoured lighter textures and simplicity of melody and phrase patterning. Certainly K.310 is far removed from the galant idiom of Schobert, Eckard, Hüllmandel and J. C. Bach, then in vogue.

Having discussed the broader questions of musical, social and intellectual context posed at the start of this chapter, we must now turn to a consideration of the closer compositional environment within which Mozart's solo sonatas came to being. What did he learn from the piano sonatas of his contemporaries?